

LETTER

TO

Mr. THOMAS BLACKWELL;

Professor of Divinity in the *Marshall's*
College of Aberdeen.

WITH OTHER

PAPERS, concerning the Observation of
CHRISTMASS, and the other FESTI-
VALS of the CHURCH.

By W. G. Citizen of Aberdeen.

DEUT. xxxii. 7.

Remember the Days of old, consider the Years of many Generations: Ask thy Father, and he will shew thee; thy Elders, and they will tell thee.

2 THIM. ii. 15.

Therefore, Brethren, stand fast, and hold the Traditions which ye have been taught, whether by Word, or our Epistles.

S. AUG. de Baptism. contra Donatist. lib. 3. cap. 23.

Non multa tum universa tenet Ecclesia, de quibus ab Apostolis precepta deus confirmavit, quaeque scripta non reperiantur.



EDINBURGH, Printed in the Year 1722.

LETTER

TO

MR. THOMAS BLACKWELL

Minister of Divinity in the Ministry

of the Church

WITH OTHER

LETTERS CONCERNING THE OBSERVATION OF
CHRISTMAS AND THE OTHER FESTIVALS
OF THE CHURCH

W. G. GARDNER

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PRINTED IN THE YEAR 1821



LETTER

To Mr. Thomas Blackwell, &c.

SIR,



Was told some Days ago, that upon the
 Sunday immediately preceeding Christ-
 mass, you took upon you in your Ser-
 mon to dissuade your Hearers from the
 Observation of that high and holy Feas-
 at unlawfull. What Reasons you made
 use of for that end, I know not; only
 I'm told (that they might give the
 more Credit to what you asserted) you
 told them, You would gladly hear what
 any Man of the Church of England could
 say for the Vindication of it; nay, even dar'd any of that Perswasion
 to reason the Case with you. This is the Story, as some not implacable
 of your Hearers told it me.

I acknowledge that on the one hand I'm unwilling to believe that
 one of your Character, who is honour'd to sit in a Divinity Chair,
 A 2 where

where some of the brightest Lights of the Protestant Church have shined, one of the Ministers of *Aberdeen*, who sometime have been famous for their Piety and Learning both at home and abroad, one that is Head of a College, could be guilty of so much Rashness or Weakness. As such a Plurality of Benefices requires an eminent Divine, so I am sure their Salaries put together make a very handsome Encouragement for such, which I acknowledge you have shown your self to be by those elaborated Treatises you have already favoured the learned World with.

But on the other hand, that being the common *Cam* of your Party, I began to suspect, that rather than to be singular, you would run with the Multitude, tho' never so far out of the Way. However, Sir, if I be misinformed, I shall be glad of it; if otherwise, I thought I could not employ my Time in this holy Season more charitably, than to inquire nearly into that Question, and so fit my self to write you this Letter. It is equally charitable to bring one that is gone astray into the right Way, as it is to cloath the naked, or feed the hungry.

You have given a pretty bold Challenge to such a great and learned Society as the whole Church of *England* are; nay, it may even be extended to all the Christian Churches in the World. For my own Share, I know none amongst them all that maintains it to be unlawfull, to celebrate that, or the other high Festivals of the Church. That Challenge shews a great deal of Courage, and speaks out a great deal of Self-Sufficiency. It looks as *Goliath* were risen from the dead to challenge the whole Host of *Israel*. However the Cause is good, the Honour of the Christian Religion is concern'd in it; and therefore I, tho' but a Stripling, and not accustom'd to carry such weighty Arms as are fit for this Combate, yet being one of that Number to whom your Challenge is directed, will for once venture to enter the Lists with you, tho' a learn'd, S. S. T. P. and in what follows shall make it clearly appear, 1^{mo}, That the Observation of *Christmas* and the other Festivals of the Church, is of Apostolical Institution or Practice, and that they were always solemnly observed in the best and earliest Ages of the Church. 2^{do}, That the Observation of them is so far from being condemn'd, that it is even approv'd by all the Protestant Churches in Europe, nay, even by all the Christian Churches in the World, a few *Schismatics* and *Sectarians* in *Britain* excepted.

That the Observation of all the high and holy Festivals of the Church, as *Christmas*, *Easter*, &c. are of the same Date, and appointed by the same Authority, to me seems to be put beyond all Controversy; and I believe your Sentiments about all of them are the same.

Sure I am Heaven could take no more Pains to notify that to Mankind, than it did, that incredible Love of God in sending *Christ*

into the World, upon which there was a solemn Sermon of *Isaiah* sent to make known that glad Tidings unto Mankind, and to begin the Solemnity of that high and holy Festival, with a heavenly Hymn, upon which there was also sent an extraordinary Star to signify the same to the Eastern Kings. It deserves our most serious Thoughts to consider the Method God took to reveal to us, that the Mediator and Saviour of Mankind had taken our Nature upon him, and manifested himself in the Flesh: For these *Magicians* paid their Devotions to the Sun, Moon and Stars, not that they believed (as some idly have imagined) that they were Gods; but only that they were Mediators betwixt God and Man, as the learned *Praxeas* argues clearly appear; and therefore he sent that extraordinary Star to tell them, that they were not the Mediators, but that the great Mediator, *Jesus Christ*, God and Man, was come into this lower World, to direct them where to find him, and as a Guide to them in their Journey. They did not see the Summons, but immediately came sufficiently provided, and having found him out, as such adored him.

Now that the Observation of *Christmas*, and the rest of the high Festivals of the Church, was of *Apostolical Institution* or Practice, will evidently appear from the early Controversy concerning the Day on which *Easter* was to be observed. The Christians in the lesser Asia, (a) the first Fifteen Bishops of Jerusalem, and probably the whole Eastern Church, observ'd *Easter* on the 14th Day of the Moon, whatever Day of the Week it fell upon, at which Time the Jews observ'd their *Pasover*. On the other Hand, the Western Church solemnized that high Festival on the Lord's Day following the full Moon. These defended themselves by the Practice of the Apostles *St. Peter*, and *St. Paul*. Those supported themselves by the authority and Practice of *St. John* and *St. John*. And whoever consider the Condescendence and Allowance that was made to the Jews by the blessed Apostles, who preached the Gospel amongst them, and the different Customs of the Church which arose from thence, will easily believe, that there is no Contradiction here; but that the Apostles observ'd the solemn Festival of our blessed Saviour's Resurrection at different Times, as Prudence and the Circumstances of the Church required. This Controversy was managed with too much Heat by *Victor* Bishop of Rome, and *Polycrates* Bishop of Ephesus: But it did not begin so late. It grew very high between the Eastern and Western Churches, even in the Time of *St. Polycarp* Bishop of Smyrna,

(a) Epiphani. Hec. 70. 48. 10.

who to stop this Fire from breaking out into a greater Flame, made a Journey to *Rome*, to interpose with *Anicetus* Bishop of that City, and the rest who were the main Champions of that Party. The two holy Bishops, tho they could not so far agree, as that either would quit the Customs, which had been handed down, by certain and evident Traditions, from the Apostles who founded their Churches; yet as became the Disciples of the meek and lowly *Jesus*, they were to retain their own Sentiments, without violating that Charity which was the great and common Law of their holy Religion. In Token whereof they communicated together, and *Anicetus* allowed *Polycarp* to consecrate the *Eucharist* in his own Church. Now is it to be thought, that St. *Polycarp* could be ignorant of the Practice of St. *John*, whose Disciple he was, according to the Testimonies of *John* Authors, both ancient, and of undoubted Credit? Nay not only *John*, but even St. *Irenaeus* (b); who was *Polycarp*'s Scholar, assures us, *He was taught by the Apostles, and familiarly convers'd with many who had seen our Lord in the Flesh*. Eusebius (c) affirms, *That St. Polycarp was familiarly conversant with the Apostles, and received the Government of the Church of Smyrna from those who had been Eye-Witnesses and Ministers of our Lord*. And the most learned Archbishop *Usher* (d) has prov'd, beyond all Controversy, that he was that Angel of the Church of *Smyrna* to whom the *Apocryphical Letter* was sent. As it is thus evident, That the great and glorious Martyr could not but know how the Apostle St. *John* and the Churches of the lesser Asia behaved themselves, as to the Observation of *Easter*; so as much Doubt can be made concerning the Veracity of so eminent and pious a Bishop, who seal'd his Faith with his Blood, *January 20th Anno 157*, about the 100 Year of his Age, as *Anicetus* did *Anno 171*.

From what has been said, it follows necessarily, That the Observation of *Easter* was of *Apostolical Institution*; and by Consequence, that the Observation of *Christmas*, and the other great Festivals, is not only lawful, but of the same Authority, and derived from the same Original. If the *Quartodeciman* Controversy had not arisen so early, it is highly probable we should have found, in the few Writings that are preserv'd of the two first Centuries, as little mention of *Easter*, as there is of *Christmas*: But then, every one may see, That it would have been an ill Way of Reasoning, to conclude from thence, that this high Festival began to be observ'd long after the Apostles Time; especially since there was a Rule universally receiv'd

(a) Acta Ignatii. Hieron. de script. Eccl. in Polycarp. Euseb. Chron.
(b) Adversus Hæreses, l. 3. c. 2. & apud Euseb. l. 4. c. 14. (c) Hist. Eccl.
l. 3. c. 36. (d) Prolegom. ad Ignatii. Epist. c. 3.

in the Christian Church, (4) That whatsoever was observ'd by the whole Church, and not enjoined by any Council, is rightly believ'd to have been delivered by the Authority of the Apostles. St. Augustine (b) tells us, *Recta fides Ecclesie columnis, qui se Ecclesie filios agnoscunt*; out of which Number, I'm afraid, he would have scord all the present Kirk of Scotland.

It appears from (c) Origen, That *Holy Innocent's Day*, which is a Concomitant of *Christmas*, was observ'd in his Time, which was about Anno 230; and can it be thought that *Christmas* itself was not then observ'd also?

The *Clementine Constitutions*, which certainly were compos'd out of the *Sidaxus* or *Sidraeus* of Clement, Ignatius, &c. command the Observation of *Christmas*, l. 5. c. 12. *Dies festus custodius, et primum quidem natalem Domini*.

There is not almost one of the ancient Fathers, who wrote Homilies, that has not left us Discourses on *Christmas*. Learned Men thought that Hippolytus Pertuensis, the Disciple of St. Irenaeus, wrote a Discourse on this great Festival. The Homily in Theophrastus, which Lucas Holstenius had promised to publish, gave Occasion to this. The learned Fabricius, in the first Volume of the late Edition of that ancient Father's Works, has given us this Homily: But the chief Subject of it is the Baptism of our blessed Saviour: Notwithstanding this, it is evident from thence, that the Festivals relating to *Christ's* Nativity were observ'd in the Time of Hippolytus, that is, Anno 220. The ancient Fathers express the Appearance of *Christ* in the Flesh, or his Nativity, sometimes by the Word *Theophania*, i. e. *The Appearance of GOD*; sometimes by the Word *Epiphania*, which signifies simply *The Appearance*: And the Feast of the *Nativity* being celebrated twelve Days, of which the first and the last, according to the Custom of the Jews in their Feasts, were high or chief Days of Solemnity, each of these might fitly be called *Theophany* or *Epiphany*. It is true, afterwards the *Epiphany* came to signify only the last Day of the great Festival, upon which the Church particularly commemorates the Appearance of the Star to the Wise Men, the glorious Manifestation at our Saviour's Baptism, and

(a) Quod universa tenet Ecclesia, nec conciliis constitutum, sed semper extitum est, non nisi Apostolica auctoritate traditum rectissime creditur, August. De Bapt. cont. Donat. cap. 24. Multa quae non inveniuntur in literis eorum, neque in conciliis posteriorum, & tamen quia per universam custodiuntur Ecclesiam, non nisi ab eis tradita & commendata creduntur, Aug. Ibid. l. 2. c. 7. In his quae scripturae nec prohibet nec jubet, illud est sequendum quod consuetudo praevaluit, quod sine dubio de traditione manavit. Tertul. De corona militis.

(b) Serm. 273. De Temp. (c) Hom. 3. in Matth.

and his miraculous Power in the Marriage in Cana, by turning Water into Wine: Yet it being evident that the *Eucharist* was observed in the Days of *Epiphany*, it follows necessarily, that *Communion* (the Foundation of that and all the other *Personals*) could not have been neglected by the Church.

We have a Discourse on the *Nativity* published amongst the Works of St. *Cyprian* Bishop of *Carthage*, who suffered Martyrdom Anno 258. It were tedious to mention *Nazarenus*, *Ambrose*, *Jerome*, *Augustine*, *Chrysostom*, *Leo Magnus*, and innumerable other Fathers of the ancient Church who have left us Sermons on our Blessed Saviour's Birth-Day. The Works of all of them are in the Library that is committed to your Care; therefore I need not copy Citations from them. Your Employment obliges you to read them, and therefore I shall close this Head, with that lamentable Proof recorded by *Nicoph. Callistus* in his *Eccles. Hist.* l. 7. c. 6. "That in the Diocesian Persecution, about the Year 312, he being then at *Nicomedia*, the Christians there, young and old, meeting in the Churches on *Christmas*-day, to celebrate that Festival, he ordered Fire to be put to the Churches, which in a short Time reduced them and all in them into Ashes; and he said, that in the Conflagration there perished about 20000, young and old."

I'm sure 'tis impossible to prove a Matter of Fact more clearly than I, by the above Cloud of those famous and unexceptionable Witnesses, have done this, viz. That the Observation of *Christmas* was the uninterrupted Practice of the Primitive Church, in the earliest and best Ages of it, from the Apostles Times, to the 400 Year of God; and to go further down is needless; for it is known by *Conciliaribus*, that this primitive Usage was never brought into Question by any in the Christian Church (*Arians* excepted, who in that and his other Errors was condemned as a Heretic) and that for near 1000 Years or thereby; nor yet to this Day is it denied by any Sect of Christians in the known World, a few *Schismatics* and *Sectarians* (as I have said) in *Britain* excepted, as by what yet follows will as clearly appear; and for that Effect I shall only make Use of the Testimonies of none but those whom you highly esteem, and pretend Relation to, whose Testimonies you will not reprobate.

The *Ausburg Confession* says, cap. 24. *Ut memoriam Domini celebrantur religiose, celebramus maximeque approbamus*. Now this *Confession* cannot fail to serve for all the *Lutheran* Churches in *Germany*, *Denmark*, *Swedland*, &c. as the *Helvetian* does to the like Purpose for all *Calvinist* Churches in *France*, *Germany*, &c. and these general Confessions serve more clearly to let us know the

tenments of these, than the Writings of the private Doctors of any of them can. Yet to satisfy you further, and fully, if possible.

The famous Professor of Divinity in Geneva, John Calvin, in Epist. ad Hallerum, says, *Quamvis dies festi hic abrogati graviter ex vestris quibusdam offenderint, ego autem sanctis restari possum, me visum ut ne optant quidem hanc rem fuisse transactam. Ex quo evocatus sum, hoc semper momentum quiescit, ut natalis Christi observaretur vestro more. Et in Epist. ad Mhuil. Buren. Ex plebisq; audivi abrogari: esse dies festos; adeo mihi in insperatam fuerat ut propendium oblitus sum.*

Bullinger that famous Minister in Zurich in Switzerland, much celebrated for his Piety and Learning, in his Epist. ad Calv. *Nostri Ecclesia plura habuit festa, sed abrogata his solam retinuit diem Dominicum et Festa Christi, scilicet, Nativitatis, Circumcisionis, &c. si igitur prius fuerit et equum esset, ut lecti sint dies festi, impium et iniquum esset, aut nullum esse, aut qui sunt contemnere. Sic sacra docent littere: sic patres antiqui et nostri seculi pii omnes doctores, sic vetus consuetudo in omnibus, omni-umque locorum et gentium Ecclesiis recepta et approbata confirmant.*

Festus Hommius, a famous Divine and Secretary to the Synod of Dort, Dissert. 41. Th. 3. builds in firmum cum jam inde ab Apostolorum temporibus primitiva Ecclesia memoriam Nativitatis, &c. festu diebus anniversaria celebraverit. Now

Sir, I hope, by what is above, you must of Necessity clearly see and perceive what Opinion the most eminent Divines in the Protestant Churches abroad were of; concerning the Observation of Christmas and the other Festivals of the Church. Calvin your great Doctor heavily regrets that they should have been disus'd at Geneva, your Mother Church, in his Absence, and immediately upon his Return he with all Diligence rectified that Abuse.

Bullinger and Hommius are positive that the Observation of these high Festivals are of no less than Apostolical Institution: Our first Reformers at home were no doubt of the same Opinion, Calderwood p. 5. Knox p. 112. and Petrie p. 119. all your Friends, in their Histories tell you, That in the Convention of the Nobility and Gentry, holden at Leith the 23^d of December, anno 1557, it was decreed in the following Words, *The Lords and Barons, professing our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, convened & frequently in Council, in which these Heads were concluded, First, It is thought fit, expedient, and ordained that in all Parishes of this Realm the Common-Prayer be read weekly on Sundays and other Festival-days, with Lessons in the Old and New Testament, conform to the Book of Common-Prayer.*

Now I hope I have made clearly appear what I at first proposed, viz. 1^{mo}, That the Observation of Christmas, and the other Festivals of the Church, was of Apostolical Institution, and the constant and uninter-

rupted Practice of the Primitive Church. And 2^{do}, That the Observation of them are approved by all the *Protestant* Churches abroad. I have made use of no Citations from the *Papish* Writers, because you are so far from denying it to be the constant Usage of that Church, that your whole Party raises the Hue and Cry upon that Observation, as *Popish Superstition*; not rightly adverting what Honour you do thereby to *Papery*, making it more than 600 Years older than really it is.

As to the *Greek Church*; *P. Simon*, and others who give us an Account of the State of that Church, plainly tell us, "That were it not for the punctual Observation of all the high Festivals of the Church, Christianity would quite vanish in all the Dominions subject to the *Mahumetan* Priests." And truly, it is my own Opinion, that now when *Arianism* and *Socinianism* prevail so much in this Nation, it is no fit Time to cry down those annual commemorative Solemnities of the Birth, Resurrection, &c. of our Saviour.

I shall trouble you no further at this Time, but to intreat you seriously to consider the fore-cited Saying of *St. Augustine*, *Recte secula Ecclesia colunt qui se Ecclesia filios recognoscunt*. Whatever the prophane Libertines or Wits of this Age may say, I assure you that some time or other you'll find it a true Saying, that *extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*. I have not writ you this out of Spite or ill Will; and therefore have shun'd all tart Expressions (which I might have not unreasonably made use of) both against Persons and Parties: Therefore as soon as your Leisure can permit you, I expect your Answer; and am,

S I R,

Your humble Servant,

Old Aberdeen, Epiphany-day,

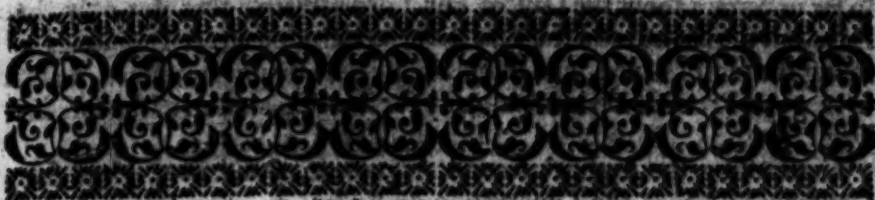
1722

W. G.

P.S. After writing of this, I was told that your Colleague *Mr. Campbell*, on the Day before the *Circumcision*, took the same Liberty to cry down the Observation of that Festival as you did that of the *Nativity*. Communicate this to him, and it may serve for you both.

To *Mr. Thomas Blackwell* Professor of Divinity in the *Marshall-College*, of *Aberdeen*.

S O M



SOME

QUERIES

Occasioned by a *PAPER* lately written
about the Observation of *CHRISTMASS*.

THE Author of the *PAPER* engageth first to prove, That the Observation of *Christmass* is of Apostolical Institution or Practice, and that it was always solemnly observed in the best and earliest Ages of the Church.

The Arguments he uses for proving this, are 1st, The History of our Lord's *Incarnation*. 2^d, The early Controversy in the Church about the Time of observing *Easter*. 3^d, The following Rule, viz. That every Usage whose Beginnings are not known, must be resolv'd to be of Apostolical Institution and Practice. 4th, Some Quotations from *St. Augustine*, *Clement Romanus*, *Tesiphorus*. To which he subjoins, that several Discourses were found among the Works of famous Doctors and Fathers on that Festival of the Church.

As to his first Argument, *Quer. 1^{mo}*, Who is it among Christians that will deny but our Lord's *Incarnation* was such an extraordinary Event, containing such Grounds of daily Praise to God, and of such great Consequence to the Church, that it deserves at first to be made known in a very solemn manner, that so the World might be satisfied of the Truth and Faithfulness of God, in fulfilling that great Promise made at the Beginning to our first Parents, of sending the *Messiah*?

But at the same Time, if the History of our Lord's *Nativity* was designed as a Divine Institution for an annual religious Observation, of the 25th of *December*; it seems not so easy to conceive that neither our Lord nor any of the Apostles should have left some Precept or other, or some Account of their Observation thereof recorded in the Scriptures, the Churches only Rule for Faith and Worship.

Quer. 2^d, Whether or not the Divine Providence, leaving the Church so far uncertain about the Day of our Lord's Birth, that not only the Day, but the Month and the Year have undergone great Disputes among the most learned, and till this Time the Day undetermined, makes up a good Proof of Divine Authority for the Observation of the fore-said Day?

Concerning the Author's second Argument, *Quer. 1^{mo}*, How far a Controversy about the Observation of *Easter*, or of a Day at several Months Distance from *December*, can ever prove the Apostolical Institution or Practice for the religious Observation of *Christmas*?

Quer. 2^{da}, How far the Eastern and Western Churches being left uncertain as to the due Time of the Observation of *Easter*, argues the clear and distinct Knowledge of the Apostolick Institution or Practice, even with Respect to the Festival of *Easter* it self; Seeing that the Knowledge of such Institution or Practice must have greatly tended to the Determination of the Controversy?

Quer. 3^{da}, Whether or not the Author of the Paper has not forgot himself, when he tells that the fore-said Controversy about the due Time of the Observation of *Easter*, was occasioned by the alledged different Sentiments of *St. John* and *Philip* from *St. Peter* and *Paul*, and yet makes use of this Controversy as an Argument for proving the Apostolick Institution and Practice for the Observation of *Easter*?

As to the Author's third Argument, consisting of the above mentioned Rule, *Quer. 1^{mo}*, Whether or not this Rule can ever prove the Apostolical Observation of *Christmas*, till once he had first proved that the Observation thereof was the ancient and general Usage of the Church, which how far he hath done by his Arguments taken from the Observation of *Easter* hath been already considered?

Quer. 2^{da}, Whether or not a merely humane conjectural Rule can ever be a solid positive Proof of a Matter of Fact, such as, that the Observation of *Christmas* was of Apostolical Institution or Practice?

Quer. 3^{da}, Whether there be any Method for proving the religious Observation to be of Apostolick Institution or Practice, but either first by showing some Precept delivered in the holy Scriptures by the Apostles, or some Practice of theirs recorded in the Scriptures, recommending and confirming that religious Observation; and consequently all Arguments not consisting of one or other of these two must be insufficient for proving the Position which he undertook to make good?

Concerning the Author's fourth Argument, *Quer. 1^{mo}*, Whether or not any Quotations or Discourses from Doctors and Fathers about the Observation of our Lord's *Nativity*, which, according to the Author, were generally so many hundred Years after *Christ*, and which at most can only argue humane Authority, can ever prove the Apostolick Institution

tion or Practice for the Observation of *Christmasti*. As to *Clement Romanus* whom he names as St. Peter's Disciple, the Author has surely forgot that the Constitutions called *Apostolical* and said to have been preserved by *Clement Romanus*, are acknowledged and found to be spurious, and that not only by *Protestants*, but by *Papists* themselves. The true Dr. *Whiston* is a great Favourer of them, but the Author of the *Paper* resister against *Trinitism*.

The second Part of the *Paper* is spent in shewing that several Churches differ from the Church of *Scotland* in Respect to the Observation of *Christmasti*; as to which, who is it that knew not so much before he told them? But at the same Time the Question in hand still remains, *viz.* Whether or not any humane Constitution or Practice can ever make out that the religious Observation of *Christmasti* is of Apostolick Institution or Practice, which in as many Words was the Position he undertook to prove.

If the Author, after collecting several Hints of historical Passages, had been pleased to have consulted that famous Account given by *Socrates the Ecclesiastick Historian*, Book 5th, Chap. 23^d, concerning the Authority of Church Festivals, he might perhaps have seen Cause not to have been altogether so peremptory and dogmatick, in asserting Apostolick Institution or Practice with Respect to *Christmasti*. *Et quod ex consuetudine potius quam ex lege.* See

Upon the whole, had the Author remembered that all judicious Writers of Controversy take so far Care of their Character, as not to make any Noise about what has been so many Years ago fully discoursed and reasoned by great and learned Men, unless they offered some new solid Arguments subversive of all the former brought against them; he must certainly have seen that in managing this controverted Subject aright, he had much more to do than to copy out a few Lines of History or humane Dictates towards making up a convincing Proof of his Position.



SOME OBSERVATIONS

ON
The **QUERIES**, given in to the
Coffee-house, about the Observation of
Christmass, and the other *Festivals* of
the **CHURCH**,
WITH
Some **REASONS** to prove that *Mr. Blackwell*
is not the *Author* of the **QUERIES**.

§ I. **C**ONCERNING the Works of God, the *Royal Psalmist* says, That he has made his wonderful Works to be remembered, Psalm iii. 4. That the Generation shall praise his Works to another, Psalm cxlv. 4.

This is not to be understood of his Works of Creation, which being permanent, and continually exposed to our View, do not want a Remembrancer to put us in Mind of them. Nor of those Works of God that belong to the common and ordinary Course of his Providence; such as the Succession of Day and Night, of Summer and Winter, Seed-time and Harvest, Sickness and Death, &c. which being often repeated and reiterated, will not suffer us to forget

forget them. But chiefly of such Events of Divine Providence as fall out but once or seldom, and so are apt in a long Course of Time to be utterly forgotten. And these extraordinary Events, whose good or bad Effects are lasting, more especially deserve to have their Memory preserved and transmitted to succeeding Generations, which (by the by) is a good Reason for observing the Anniversary Fast of 30th January, in Remembrance of the execrable Murder of the blessed Martyr King Charles I. whereof the malicious Effects and bad Consequences ly heavy upon the Nation at this very Day. Moreover among the Events of Providence, whose good Effects are of a long Continuance, none are so considerable, and whose gracious and benign Influences are so extensive and durable, as the wonderful Steps of the Work of Man's Redemption, I mean the *Nativity, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension* of our Saviour, and the *Coming of the Holy Ghost*: And consequently none are more worthy to be kept in Remembrance.

§ 1. Now there have been sundry Ways of preserving the Memory of signal and remarkable Events of Divine Providence, and transmitting the same to future Ages. One is by *verbal* Relation and *oral* Tradition from Father to Son, from one Generation to another: Thus the Memory of the *Deluge*, the Calling of *Abraham*, the Overthrow of *Sodom*, and other remarkable Instances of Providence from the Creation to the giving of the Law, during which Space of Time, the Life of Man extended itself to some hundreds of Years, were preserved.

But after that Man's Age was contracted to 70 or 80 Years, *Oral Tradition* being a very uncertain Way of conveying the Knowledge of remarkable Events to distant and remote Times and Generations,

Another Way of preserving the Memory of remarkable Events, is to put them on *Record* by writing, whereby the Knowledge of the Transactions of former Times, of the *Persian, Grecian, and Roman Monarchies* are conveyed down to our Days. This is a surer Way than the former, of preserving the Memory of signal Acts of Providence, and transmitting the Knowledge of the same to remote Ages, with a Degree of Certainty that satisfies all reasonable Persons. But that is only for the Benefit of those who are able and willing to acquaint themselves with History, and in order to that, to study the Languages in which they have been written, who bear but a small Proportion to the rest of Mankind.

Besides *oral Tradition* and *written Records*, a 3^d *Mean* of preserving the Memory of signal Acts of Providence, and transmitting the Knowledge of them to future Ages, is, *so observe stated Times re-*
turning

turning once in a Year, at least which are to be distinguished from other Times, by certain outward Circumstances, such as, abstaining from bodily Labour, fasting or feasting in a sober Way, religious Assemblies, wherein those great Events of Providence are to be commemorated. This Mean of preserving the Remembrance of the great and memorable Acts of Divine Providence, is useful to all who observe these Times, and in some Measure even to those who condemn or disapprove the keeping of those Times, who cannot censure them without making some mention of the Cause of them.

§ 3. For this Reason God, in his great Wisdom, was pleased to make Use of this Expedient for preserving the Remembrance of two of his great Works, *to wit*, the Creation of the World, and the Deliverance of the *Israelites* from their Bondage in *Egypt*. For a Memorial of the Work of Creation, which God finished in six Days, and rested on the seventh, he ordered a Day of seven to be separated from bodily Labour, and kept holy, as you have it in the End of the Fourth Commandment, *Wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath Day, and hallowed it.* And for a Memorial of the miraculous Deliverance of the *Israelites* from their Bondage in *Egypt*, when God after he had scourged and visited the Land of *Egypt* with many Plagues, to complete the Work sent forth his destroying Angel, and cut off the first-born in the Land of *Egypt*, both of Man and Beast, passing by the Houses of the *Israelites*, whose Door Posts were sprinkled with the Blood of the *Paschal Lamb*, whereby the *Egyptians* were so terrified that they thrust out the *Israelites* in haste, insomuch that they were obliged to take their Dough in their Troughs before it was leavened, and put it upon their Shoulders. In Remembrance of this great Deliverance, the Lord commanded the Feasts of the *Passover* and *Unleavened Bread*, to be observed by them in all Time coming, the Ordinance of which is set down at large in the *xix. of Exodus*.

§ 4. Being instructed by so plain an Example, the *Jews* in the Days of their Captivity appointed the Feast of *Purim*, to be a thankful Commemoration of the merciful Deliverance wrought for them from the Plot and Conspiracy laid by *Haman*, for cutting off the whole Nation of the *Jews* in one Day; and this by their own Authority, and without an express Command or Warrant from God, appears from *Ester ix.* the *Jews* ordained, and took upon them, and upon their Seed, and upon all such as joined themselves to them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two Days, *viz.* the 14th and 15th of the Month *Adar*, every Year, and that these Days should be remembered and kept throughout every Generation, and that these Days of *Purim* should not fail from among the *Jews*.

fathers, with what Confidence can Christians of latter Ages plead Exemption from observing the *Festivals* introduced by the Christians of the first and purest Ages?

§ 7. The Light of Reason and good Sense teach us, That the Observation of certain Days yearly, for a Commemoration of singular Mercies received from the Hands of God, is a notable Expedient for keeping up the Remembrance of them: And tho' there is no Command in Scripture for observing the Festivals of the Church, yet we have Precedents and Examples of Feasts instituted and observed on such Occasions, whereby it appears, that the Christian Festivals are warranted in Scripture from the Examples set before us by God himself in the Feasts of the *Passover* and *Unleavened Bread*, and by the *Jews* in their Feasts of *Purim* and the *Dedication*. As the Divine Precepts set down in Scripture lay upon us an Obligation of Obedience, so good Examples are left on Record for our Direction and Imitation.

§ 8. But it is further urged against the Festivals of the Church, That the Observation of Days is not lawful under the Gospel, and that the imposing of them is destructive of our Christian Liberties. St. Paul finds Fault with the Christians of *Galatia* for observing Days, *Gal. iv. 10. Ye observe Days, and Months, and Times, and Years, I am afraid of you that I have bestowed Labour on you in vain*, and *Gal. v. 1.* he charges them not to submit to such Impositions: *Stand fast in the Liberty wherein Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again into the Yoke of Bondage.* *Col. ii. 16. Let no man therefore judge you in Meat or Drink, or in respect of an holy Day, or the New Moon, or of the Sabbath Days.* For Answer it is to be observed, That the *Jews* who first embraced the Christian Religion, continued with it to observe the Rules and Ceremonies of the Law of *Moses*, and some were so zealous that Way, that it could not satisfy them, the Christian *Jews* should still observe the Law, but would needs oblige the *Gentile* Christians to be circumcised, and keep the Law, as appears from *Acts xv.* where we read, that *certain Men came down from Judea to Antioch, who taught the Brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the Law of Moses, ye cannot be saved.* And after Paul and Barnabas were come up to Jerusalem, we read, *v. 5.* that there are certain of the *Seet* of the *Pharisees*, saying, that it was needful to circumcise the believing *Gentiles*, and to command them to keep the Law of *Moses*. Against these *Judaizing* Christians our Apostle stood up, and vigorously opposed them, as he informs us in *Gal. ii.* telling us that he went up to Jerusalem with *Titus* in his Company, who though a *Greek* was not compelled to be circumcised, and that because of false Brethren unawares brought in, who came in privately (says he) to spy out our Liberty which we have in Christ Jesus.

that they might bring us into Bondage, to whom we gave Place by Subjection, no not for an Hour. And in the Sequel of that chap. he tells us, that he reproved Peter for his Compliance in that Matter. Now when the Apostle inveighs against the Observation of Days, he means only such as were enjoined by the Law of Moses, which with the other Rites and Ceremonies, being Shadows of Things to come, as he calls them, Col. ii. 17. ceased, after the Substance, which is Christ, was come. And tis of these, that these Passages of Scripture above-mentioned, and others of the like Nature, are to be understood; as will be plain to any that considers these Places with their Contexts. It is also possible that the Words to the Galatians may refer to Heathen Observances, and so the mention of Heathenism in which they had lived, *verse 8. chap. ii.* doth seem to imply, and so doth St. Ambrose interpret them: And then the Meaning will be, that they observed ominous Days, as the Gentiles were wont to do, would not begin any Work or Journey upon such and such Days; and these have nothing common with the Christian Festivals.

§ 9. As to the Objection that is drawn from the Riot and Excess which is generally used in celebrating the Festival of our Saviour's Nativity, &c. We Answer, That the customary Hospitality and good Cheer is not of the Essence or Substance of any Festival, but only a decent Concomitant of the same, and therefore the Excess or Abuse in that is not in Equity imputable to the Hospitality itself, much less to the Festival, which consists principally in Prayers and Praises. The best of Things may be abused, and if the Abuse were a sufficient Reason for laying them aside, then the Scriptures themselves must be laid aside, which have been so oft abused by Hereticks to support their Opinions; and Preaching, which is a Mean of Salvation, must also be disused, which hath been but too oft abused in diffusing Seditious and Disloyalty.

The common Rule is certainly good, *Tollatur abusus, & maneat legitimus usus*; and yet by the by this was all the Reason that was alledged in the Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, for laying aside the Use of the Lord's Prayer, and so depriving Christians of an essential Part of their Worship, in Opposition to a Gospel Precept, and the universal Practice of the Church in all Ages. I do own for my self, that I have been very much edified to see the rich upon that Festival communicate of their Abundance to the Poor, and the first Christians, who had all Things in common, neither said any of them, that ought of the Things which he possess was his own (as we read in Acts iv. 32.) as far imitated by a general Hospitality as the present corrupt State could allow: As I have been, on the other Hand, surpris'd to see the morose Bigotry of a Set of Men, distinguishing themselves more remarkably

markedly by bodily labour and courser Cheer upon these Occasions than at any other Time. And

*Who with more Zeal kept holy Day
The wrong, than others the right Way.*

§ 10. Mr. Leslie, in his *short and easy Method with the Deists*, makes use of four Rules whereby the Certainty of Matters of Fact is demonstrated, one whereof is this, That not only publick Monuments be kept in Memory of it, but some outward Actions to be performed. Now for these that declare against the Christian Festivals (which are publick Monuments kept up in Memory of the most remarkable Steps which by our Saviour carried on the Work of Man's Redemption, to his Birth, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension, and the Coming of the holy Ghost) contribute their Endeavours to weaken one good Argument for the Certainty of our Christian Religion, and join issue with the Deists, and its other publick and declared Enemies, is very manifest from what the Author of the *Letter* has observed from the Testimony of P. Simon, and others, who plainly tells us, "That were it not for the Observation of the Festivals of the Church, Christianity would be quite evanish in all the Dominions subject to the Mahometan Power." I could wish also these Men would consider how far they are throwing out the Use of the Apostles Creed in England, and the singing the *Evangelical Hymns* and the *Doxology* in their publick Worship, contributes to the propagating of *Arianism*, which is long since revived of late in the Island.

These Things being premised, I come now to consider the *Queries* which some Persons (I believe none of his Friends) would have us to believe are done by Mr. Blackwell. How unjust this Imputation is, I shall endeavour by what follows to make appear.

And first, That they are not done by Mr. Blackwell Principal of the College of Aberdeen, is evident from this, that he (the said Mr. Blackwell) gave the *Christmas* Vacancy to the Students of the College, by a publick Intimation and speech in the College-hall, from Friday preceding *Christmas* last, to the first *Tuesday* of the new Year. It was as is thought that after so doing he would be so inconsistent with himself, as to put out *Queries* about the Unlawfulness of the Observation of the Christian Festivals. No certainly, this is not to be imagined.

Nor is it to be thought that Mr. Blackwell the Minister is the Author of the *Queries*, for had he been so, he had certainly both by his Principle and Trust, and by Virtue of a standing Act of the General Assembly

Assembly of the foresaid Kirk, June 1645, before this Time professed Mr. Blackwell the *Principal*, tho' he had been his nearest and dearest Friend: And you know generally speaking, *amicus est adversarius* so did Alexander the Great call his Friend *Antagonus*.

That the *Quarries* are none of Mr. Blackwell's Professor of Divinity in the foresaid College, we shall prove to a Demonstration in our Observations on the particular *Quarries* as we go through them.

But then, what if they should be found to be Mr. Blackwell's, the Author of *Schema sacrum*, &c. I must confess I cannot so well impute that Author, the *Quarries* bearing a great Resemblance to such of his Works as I have read; and it is so true, which I have heard reported, that he was like to have been called in Question by the General Assembly, for advancing some *heterodox* Positions in these Books, this adds to the Suspicion, and may possibly raise the Hite and Cry after him, and convene the *Cells* of the Place to apprehend him, and bring him before a Judge to answer for the *Quarries*.

Here my Servant, a very arch little Boy, whom I employ to write for me, because he writes a very fair Hand, fell into a sudden Laughter.

And what is the Matter with you? said I.

Nothing at all, Master, replied he, but that I was reading the Comedy of *Amphytrio* or the two *Sons*, and calling to mind that Part of the Comedy where *Sosia* being doubled, is brought in laughing himself, it made me laugh: But there you know there was a *Jester* and *Mercury*; but Sir, you manage the Comedy in hand without the Help of a God. And truly, Sir, it would be very diverting to see a Process carried on by Mr. Blackwell the *Principal* against Mr. Blackwell the *Principal*. O but then to see how Mr. Blackwell the Professor of Divinity would behave, and how Mr. Blackwell the Author of *Schema sacrum*, &c. would be perplexed how to determine which which Side to join, for being equally concerned in both, whichever he takes by the hand in Opposition to the other, he shall be bound to persecute himself! This would be a Morpunction indeed with a Witness, which you know he declares against in his *Ratio sacra* as a Monkish Foppery. But then what Part would Mr. Blackwell the *Religious* act, who bears the same Relation to all the former. Should he fling himself up among his Books, and leave them to contend or compound the Matter among them, it would not do, for he is obliging a Person in the Controversy, that his Presence would be found absolutely necessary to determine the Process, and I could hold no hundred to one he would not stand by as a idle Spectator. Here we should have Blackwell Accuser, Blackwell Emuler, Blackwell Partner, Blackwell Defender, Blackwell Professor, and Blackwell Antagonist.

Blackwell omnia, all by the Ears; and so whoever loses, *Blackwell* must gain, and whoever gains, *Blackwell* must lose.

Peace (*said I*) Impudence, What do you mean by all this?

What do I mean, why? I hope you are not ignorant that all Mr. *Blackwells* are one and the same individual Person, only raised into himself, and raised to certain Powers: Allow me to turn them up conform to the Rules of *Algebra* (for I learned a little of Art from Mr. *McLawrence*) first, *Blackwell* Minister multiplied *Blackwell* Professor, that is the second Power: Here we have him *quadratus*. That again into *Blackwell* Principal, is the third Power: Here we have him *cubed* (which tho' it makes him a *Solide*) yet that that nor any of his Powers makes him *totus verus atque rotundus*. That again into *Blackwell* Bibliothecarian, is the fourth Power: Is a *Bimadrans* or Square of a Square, and all this into the Author *Schemata satrum*, makes a fifth Power: And yet involve him or turn him as you please, turn him up or turn him down, you will never get any thing more of him, but one and the same individual Mr. *Blackwell*: Just as you know, an *Unit* or *Cypher* raised to any Power, is no more but *Unit* or *Cypher* still.

Hold, Sirrah (*said I*) talk no more at this rate, or expect your reward. I would not allow my self to think that all these make one Person, upon any Account. I have heard of these Gentlemen that they are all Ministers of the present established Church, and easily none of their Consciences would allow them to hold such Places or Benefices, against which the Kirk of *Scotland* exclaims, as a *suppotion* in the Church of *England*.

Well (*said he*) I shall say no more; but should Mr. *Blackwell* Principal be banished for some Misdemeanour, I shall suppose the thing a Lampoon or so. If you find not, that this would make four Cantons, each of which is no contemptible Living, and would cost some persecuted Clergyman I know, who without Disparagement of Mr. *Blackwell*, is not inferior to him in Piety or Parts, I shall consent to leave my native Country, and bear him Company in Exile.

No more of that, Sirrah (*said I*) leave your prating, and take up your Pen, and write the *Queries*, upon which we shall make our Observations.

And first, upon *Query* 1st against *Argument* 1st.

Here the Author of the *Queries* plainly owns, That there is no Christian who does not acknowledge that the Nativity of our Saviour was such an extraordinary Event, and of such Consequence to the Church, that it contains Grounds of daily Praises to God. Who is it that denies? i. e. no Christian denies; for such Questions imply, and are

equal to a strong Negation, from which we shall form this Argument.

If this Event contains Grounds of daily Praises by the Consent of all Christians, then the Practice of the whole Christian Church in setting apart one particular Day in the Year for praising God, and keeping up the Memory of this great Event, is lawfull: *See verum prout, argo, &c.* The Minor is granted by the Author of the *Queries*: the Consequence is evident from all the Rules of Logick: For what may lawfully be done every Day, is certainly lawfull to be done on any one particular Day: And as we have the universal Consent of all Christians for the first, so we have the universal Practice of all Christians in all Ages for the last. See § 5. and 7. above. Mr. Blackwell the Professor could not be the Author of this *Query*.

As to the second Part of the *Query*, we answer, That Abraham the Father of the faithful rejoiced to see that Day, *Job. viii. 16.* The Angel expresses it by the Tide of good Tidings of great Joy which shall be to all People, *Luke ii. 10.* *Because this Day is born to you a Saviour,* and v. 14. the whole heavenly Host joined in the Doxology, *Glory to GOD on high, &c.* All which being considered as our Copies and Examples; and I believe had the Author of the *Queries* been then alive, and had not joined with so good a Company in Presence of God, he must needs have been thought a very unreasonable Dissenter. Seeing they cannot be imitated by us exactly by bearing them Company on the very Day, the next and most natural Way of endeavouring to do it, is on the Anniversary Return of that Day. A Duty cannot be performed without the Circumstance of Time; and that it is a certain set Time, tends only to the securing the Duty of some Share of our Time, against the Fractions of Men, and Disturbances of worldly Affairs, which might otherwise rob it of all. See § 7. above.

As to the second *Query*, The Day being only a Circumstance of the Festival, tho' indeed there might be a Mistake in it, that is of no greater Moment than the false Calculation of a Day; which were it never so accurately set, yet the least Slip in Chronology, or want of Exactness in Calendars, would alter it again. But then there is little Reason to doubt, but that this which we observe is the very Day: for the Testimony of St. Chrysostome is clear for the Tradition of it out of the *Consular Tables at Rome*, wherein the very Day is set down, *Consul Augusti fidelissimum testem Dominica natiuitatis Romani Archidiaconi Chrysostomi.* Chrysost. in nat. Christi.

And so both the Greek and Latin Churches, who had sharp Contentions about the Time of keeping *Easter*, yet have agreed uniformly in this. Those that will quibble about a precise Day, and reject a Festival upon the Account of the Uncertainty of the Time, which is only a Circumstance

Circumstance of the Festival, will find as great Difficulty about the Day of the Week, the Jewish Sabbath, since the Sun's standing still one Time, *Josh. x. 13.* So the Sun stood still in the middle of Heaven, and waited not to go down about a whole Day. And his going to any Degrees backward at another Time, must certainly have altered the common Course of the Days of the Week. The same also might be said of the Christian Sabbath, since it is demonstrable, and has been found by Experience, that Sailors according as their Course is towards the East or West, in very long Voyages, do gain or lose a Day, and consequently their Sabbaths must differ. But this is such a Quibble, as to make to the purpose, that it can never be thought to have proceeded from a Professor of Divinity, nor deserves any more Consideration.

But since the Author is so much for Queries, I shall close this Observation with one Query. If the first Christians had Power to change the weekly Festival from the last to the first Day of the Week, what shew of Reason can they be denied the Power of fixing upon certain Days for their Anniversary Festivals?

As to the first Query against the second Argument, there is such a ingenious Mincing of the Author of the Letter's Position: it could not have proceeded from Mr. Blackwell, who is known to be a Man of great Ingenuity, whatever the Masters of the College may allege as to his Behaviour, with Respect to the last Vacancy in the College, or any of his other Enemies, with Regard to his Behaviour about the Trinity Church. Had the Author of the Queries, who was quibbling, stated the Author of the Letter's Position fully and in his own Words, which it seems he took Care purposely not to do, in his Preface to the Queries, he had left no place for this Query. The Thesis or Position is this, *That the Observation of Christmas and the other Festivals is an Apostolical Institution or Practice.* And a little after he says, *That the Observation of all the high and holy Festivals, such as Christmas, &c. are of the same Date, and approved by the same Authority, seems to be past all Controversy; and I believe your Sentiments (meaning Mr. Blackwell's) about them are the same.* See the Letter.

If this be so, and the Author of the Queries has advanced nothing to the contrary, then an Argument taken from the Observation of one of them, concludes for the Observation of all; and consequently this is an useless Query, and would have been proposed by none who was acquainted with fair Reasoning or ingenious Dealing. Let the Reader for his fuller Satisfaction look back to § 6. above.

So (said my Boy) you must certainly be under some very great Obligations to Mr. Blackwell; you are at so much Pains to vindicate him

and to proclaim his Ingenuity to the World; I can assure you, you would oblige him singularly: If you would vindicate a certain Friend of his, whom I earnestly love as well as himself, and that is very much, for a certain Letter he wrote, at the Desire of a certain Lady in Favour of her Husband, whose Life was in Danger in the late War civil. The Letter indeed which the Lady saw was much to the Gentleman's Advantage; shewing that he was a peaceable Man, and that he had been forced out to that Affair, &c. But the *Postscript*, which the Lady saw not, was of a different Strain, shewing, that he certainly deserved to die, and intreating that the Laws might be put into Execution against him. I know where the authentick Copies of both are to be found.

No more of your Interruptions (*said A*) with your certain Friend, your certain Letter, and your certain Lady: Let Mr. Blackwell take Care of his Friend's Reputation, if the Person be such a one as you represent him. Whatever Share he may have in Mr. Blackwell's Friendship, I think his Friendship will be very little regarded by any honest Man; for such double Dealing must certainly render him very odious.

As to the second Query, against the second Argument, I believe every Person that is Master of common Sense will allow, that a Controversy about the Circumstances of the Time of observing *Easter*, where both Parties agreed in the Observation of the Festival it self, is a good Proof that it was the Practice of both Parties, and consequently of all Christians at that Time; for to have Mankind controverting about the Circumstances of a thing that was not, would be a very ridiculous Supposition. *Easter* then was certainly observed at that Time when the Controversy about the Time of observing it was in Agitation, which by the by was very soon, about the Beginning of the second Century.

And that the Observation of it did not then commence, seems as clear, and obvious to common Sense, and that it offers fairly to be an Apostolical Practice, the Author of the *Letter* has abundantly proved.

As to the third Query, in which he seems to triumph over the Author of the *Letter*, as if he had forgot himself. I fancy the Elevation and Transport he has been in, hath made him guilty of what he charges the Author of the Letter with; for my self, I do declare, that if there be any Sense and Meaning in it, it surpasses my Comprehension.

If he means by it, that the different Sentiments of St. John and Philip from St. Peter and Paul, as he calls them, about the Time of the Observation of *Easter*, is an Argument against the Observation of *Easter*; he is certainly a very subtle Logician, and has from an antecedent deduced a Consequent, which I believe no Man but himself could

have done. If there be any other Meaning in the *Query*, let him explain himself more fully, and shew what it is.

That this *Query* is not Mr. *Blackwell's*, no, nor any modern Presbyterian's, is very probable, who all reckon it a piece of Superstition to give the Title of *Saint* to any of the Apostles: It is true the Author, whoever he be, has taken care not to be too prodigal in this, for whereas any one of the Apostles of the Covenant is thought Meritorious enough to make one intire Saint, yet he will allow two of the Apostles *St. John* and *Philip* to make but one Saint, and *St. Peter* and *Paul* to make no more but another.

As to the first *Query* against the third *Argument*, which is in these Words, *Quer. Whether or not this Rule can ever prove the Apostolical Observation? &c.* *Quer. contra*, 1^{mo}. Whether or not the proving the Observation of any one Festival, which the Author of the Letter has done of *Easter*, to have been of antient and general Usage in the Church, be not *argumentum ad hominem* to those who equally, and upon the same Grounds deny all the Festivals, and preach against them. *Quer.* 2^{do}, Whether there be any Sense in this *Query*, since the Author of it had proved first, That there is no more Authority, or better Reasons for observing one Festival than another, which he has now where done, nor ever will. The Reader may look back to §. 1. above towards the End. *Quer.* 3^{io}, Where, or by what Argument the Author of the *Queries* has proved that the Observation of *Easter* was not the antient and universal Usage of the Church; tho' he concludes his *Query* that that hath been already considered.

As to the second *Query*,

Quer. contra, What other Rule the Author of the *Queries*, or any other Man, who flights and rejects this Rule as he does, can bring to proving the Canon of the Scripture, or Infant Baptism, since there is no particular List in the Scriptures of the canonical Books, of the same, and as little Mention of Infant Baptism. I think he might have been a little more modest in calling it a *merely humane conjectural Rule*, and have shew'd a little more Respect to the Fathers of the first Ages of the Church, who had the extraordinary *Charismata*, and Communication of the Divine Spirit in a more plentiful Measure than what after Ages can pretend to. (which I believe he will not call into Question) and were certainly better Judges of what was Apostolical than the Author of the *Queries*, or any other Person at this Distance of Time. I think my self much safer in following the Practice of the primitive Christians, and the Rule which is used by *St. Augustine*, and the Reverent of *Vincentius Lirinensis*, *Quod semper & ubique obtinuit*, &c. than to separate my self from the universal Christian Church for any Reason that the Author of the *Queries* has adduced.

This Query cannot be Mr. Blackwell's, who knows very well that the Proof of most part, if not all Matters of Fact, is founded upon the supposed Veracity and Fidelity of the Relations and Witnesses of them, which makes no more but a humane, tho' not a conjectural Rule.

As to the third Query, it is fully answered from the Beginning of the Discourse to the End of § 7. to which I refer the Reader, and shall propose a further Query.

Quer. Whether or not these who not only have thrown out the Observation of the Christian Festivals, which tho' not commanded, yet are warranted in Scripture, by the Examples set before us by God himself in the Feasts of the Passover and unleavened Bread, and by the Jews in their Feasts of Purim and Dedication, and have been observed by the Christian Church in all Ages, and who have also thrown out the Use of the Lord's Prayer, contrary to a positive Gospel Precept, and the universal Practice of all Christians, are to be reckoned Schismatics from the Catholick Church?

As to the Query against the fourth Argument, The Authority of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, humane as it is, and tho' some hundreds of Years after Christ, for the Observation of *Christmas*, is more to be regarded than any Authority that the Author of the Queries can bring (for as yet he has brought none) against it; which when brought, if there be any, will be found only to be humane, and as a far greater Distance from our Saviour's Time, and consequently the less to be regarded even by the Author of the Queries himself.

As to the last part of this Query, where again he triumphs over the Author of the *Letter*, and upbraids him with Forgetfulness, telling him, That the *Clementine* Constitutions are acknowledged, and found to be spurious, and that not only by Protestants, but by Papists themselves. Had he given himself a little more Trouble to examine that Affair, and to consult the Authors about it on both Sides, perhaps he would have found less Ground for his Triumph.

I am far from agreeing with (a) Mr. Blondel the famous Patron of the Presbyterians, who thought that the *Clementine* Constitutions, consisting of Eight Books, as we have them now, were written towards the End of the second Century, by the Author of the *Recognitions*. Arch-bishop Usher (b) and (c) Dr. Ghab have demonstrated that they are not the same with the Constitutions mentioned by Epiphanius, or the *Διδάχνη*, or *Doctrine of the Apostles*, mentioned by Eusebius, Athanasius, and Nicophorus Constantinopolitanus, tho' in many things they agree. The incomparable Bishop Pearson thought, that the present *Apostolick Constitutions* were first published towards the End

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of

(a) Pseudo-Isidor, & Toman, var. p. 1. (b) Prolegem. in Ignat. Epist. p. 3.
(c) Spicileg. patrum, Tom. 1. p. 41, 42.

of the fourth, or the Beginning of the fifth Century, that of our Englishmen, yet before the Author of the *imposed Work* on them, who cites some Things out of the 8th Book, Chap. 2^d, and that they were compiled out of the ancient *Decretals*, or *decretals* of the *Apostles*, of *Clement Romanus*, *Ignatius*, *Polycarp*, *Hippolytus*, &c. so that the most part of these were retained in the new Work, except in those Points, which were contrary to the Customs of the late Times. The most pious and learned Dr. *Græb* (a) calls this a very probable Conjecture; but (b) he is fully convinced of the Certainty of it, after he had carefully compared and considered two *Barrois* Manuscripts in the *Bodleian Library*; and indeed it could not but be so, as will appear to any that considers the Account he gives of the *Matter*. It is very true the Compiler of the present *Constitutions* has added some times a Chapter for making a Connection between one Constitution and another; and sometimes he has plainly contradicted the old and original *Constitutions*, whenever the Customs of his Age happened to differ from the Discipline of the earliest Times: But this notwithstanding, the Authority that I have brought from the *Clementine Constitutions* cannot be suspected to be an Interpolation, unless the Querist shall prove that the Observation of *Christmas* was not practised in the first Ages of the Church, which he will never be able to do.

But let that be as it will, the Stress of the Affair lies not on it, the Observation of the Christian Festivals is sufficiently proved without recurring to these Constitutions; and when he brings as good Arguments from Scripture, or Antiquity, for the whole Fabrick of the present Kirk, in its Doctrine, Worship, and Discipline, as what is brought for the Observation of the Christian Festivals, he will do more than what he has done in all his *Queries*, or perhaps any Man of the Party ever did.

Then he goes on to tell us, That the second Part of the Letter is spent, in shewing *That several Churches differ from that of Scotland, with respect to the Observation of Christmas*. Here again is a dangerous minding of the Author's Words, who in express Terms tells us, that the present Kirk of *Scotland* differs from all the Christians in the known World, which he proves from their *Confessions*, and their Authors who are highly esteemed by the present Kirk, such as *Calixtus*, *Bullinger*, &c.

But the Author of the *Queries* thought fit, instead of all to write *several*, which had he not done, it is scarcely to be thought that he would have had the Confidence to have owned the whole Charge, which

which in so many Words would have been the owning that the present Kirk of Scotland was guilty of Schism from the universal Christian Church, nor did he think fit to take any Notice of the Authority of *Calvin, Bullinger, &c.* though he might have said the same of them that he had said of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, that their Testimonies were but humane, and their Rules merely conjectural: But then, *Quæritur* whether or not the Authority of all these Fathers humane, as it is, and their merely conjectural Rules, as he calls it, together with the Authority of *Calvin, Bullinger, &c.* do nor to any reasonable Man make more for the Observation of this Festival, than any Authority, or Argument, or Rule that the Author of the *Quæries* hath brought against it?

I do declare that it is to me Matter of Wonder, to see a Man, who shews so little Regard to the Authority of the Fathers, and talks so very disdainfully of them, and their Rules, so very soon forget himself, a Fault of which he so ironically accused the Author of the *Letter*, as to value himself and his Cause so much, upon a Discovery he had made of a Passage of *Socrates* the Ecclesiastick Historian, which the Writer of the *Letter* for all his Reading and Skill in History, had never observed. And is the Authority of *Socrates* any Thing more than humane, or is it to be preferred to the Authorities of all the Fathers?

No certainly, this is not the Matter; but because the Author of the *Letter* had cited several Quotations from the Fathers and others in the *Latin* Tongue, the Author of the *Quæries* would not be behind Hand with him there, he would both let him, and the Zealors of his own Party, know that he was a Book-learn'd Man, that he had read *Socrates*, though not in the Original Greek, and could quote *Latin* as well as the Author of the *Letter*, and that he had Eyes in his Head as well as other Men, and that he could see as far into a Millstone as a Mason, that he had discovered a Treasure that none of the learned Men, of any Church before him had done, or if they had, they would not have been so dogmatick and peremptory about the Observation of *Festivals*. This is a valuable Discovery indeed, far beyond that of an Island, yea perhaps of one half of the habitable World. Now to direct you to the Place, he gives you its Longitude and Latitude, it lies in Book V. Chap. 22. *Et quod ex consuetudine potius, &c.* Now because this Place speaks a foreign Language, I shall for the Benefit of our Countrymen make it speak our Mother Tongue; that so every Lay Elder, Common Pretender, and fighting Sister, may have the Benefit of the grand Discovery, which the Discoverer himself thought a Pearl too precious to be exposed to publick Views. *Quod ex consuetudine, &c.* Which certainly (says the Historian, meaning the Observa-

tion of Easter) was observed from the very Beginning, rather by Pre-
 scription than Precept, as is clear by the Events of the Controversy. For the
 most Part of Asia the lesser observed this Festival on the 14th Day of the
 Month, whether it happened to be the Sabbath Day or not, between
 whom and those who observed it otherwise, the Debate came to this
 Height, that Victor Bishop of Rome, in a great Heat of Passion, com-
 municated all the Christians in Asia, who observed Easter on the 14th
 Day of the Month, for which rash Procedure Irenæus wrote him a very
 sharp Letter, in which he both blames him for his Passion, and tells him
 That those who differed among themselves about the Time of the Obser-
 vation of this Festival, ought not for that to be cut off from the Commu-
 nion of Christians.

What (said my Boy) is this the grand Discovery? Pray, Sir, be sure
 you have done Justice to the Original by your Translation: I am
 apt to think, Sir, (I ask you Pardon for this Freedom) that you have
 mis'd or mistaken something, for in all this there is nothing to the
 Purpose, nothing that makes either for the Author of the *Queries*, or
 against the Author of the Letter: Pray, Master, (for like an idle Boy as
 I was, I neglected the Study of the *Latin Tongue*) what is the Meaning
 of that in *Horace*, *parturient montes*, &c.

Did you never hear the Fable of the Mountain's bringing forth a
 Mouse?

O yes, Master, I remember the Fable, what a Noise there was, and
 what great Expectations about the Birth, and then how ridiculous a
 Thing was brought forth. But, Master, have you more to say? Yes
 a few Words about the Author of the *Queries's* Conclusion, which
 generally Authors are to sum up the whole Force of their Arguments,
 the Words are these upon the whole.

That Arguments should be solid, allowing the Metaphor, I shall
 grant, but why they should be new, is what I do not so well under-
 stand: I think an old Truth may be very well proved by old Argu-
 ments, and the older the Truths are, the less Occasion there is, and
 the greater Difficulty to find new Arguments to prove them. O! but
 then, all the old Arguments have been fully discoursed and reasoned
 by great and learned Men, many Years ago. It may be so, but I wish
 the Author had told us where they had been discus'd, and by whom.
 I am sure he needs not go far back to find his Author; if he has any,
 he must probably be since *Calvin's* Days, and I believe every Body will
 allow that it is not the Author of the *Queries*.

Upon the Whole, to use his own Words, Had the Author of the
Queries remembred that all judicious Writers of Controversy, who
 take Care of their Character, reckon that something more is to be
 done in order to overturn an old and universal Usage of the Church,
 than

than either to preach, or rather to prate against it from the Pulpit, or propose a few quibbling *Queries*, and then adduce an impertinent *Latin* Citation; and lastly to tell us, that the Subject has been discoursed and reasoned before, without telling us when, or where, by whom, or after what Manner. I say, had the Author of the *Queries* remembered this, he had not exposed himself by his *Queries*, nor injured a learned Professor of Divinity, by having them thought to be his.

Master, said my Boy, Allow me one Favour, and that is here to subjoin one or two *Queries* of my own?

Let me hear them said I.

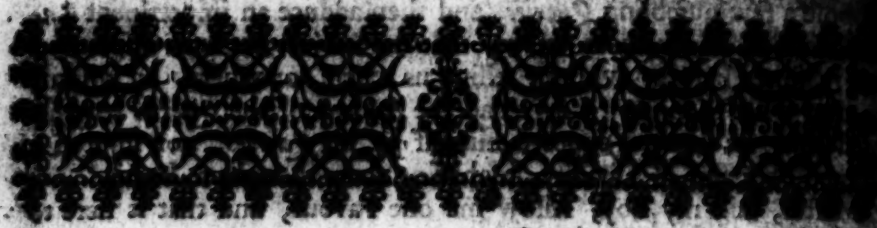
Quer. 1^{mo}, Whether or not Mr. Thomas Blackwell, Parson of St. Nicolas, Principal of the *Marishal-Colledge*, Professor of Divinity, Patron of the Trades-Hospital, Keeper of the Library, Author of *Sebeima sacrum*, &c. may not reasonably be reputed the Author of the *Queries*, after all the Pains you have been at to vindicate him? And that for these Reasons, First, The said Mr. Blackwell, in all his Capacities, and with all his Designations, received a subscribed and sealed Letter from Mr. William Gordon, in Answer to which the *Queries* came out, before Mr. Gordon had given any Copy of the Letter to any other Person; and then after the *Queries* appeared, the same Mr. Gordon wrote him a very discreet Letter, desiring to know if the *Queries* were done by him, or by his Advice or Approbation; and yet he has never answered them, or given any other Answer to Mr. Gordon's Letter.

Quer. 2^{da}, Whether or not (supposing Mr. Blackwell to be the Author of the *Queries*) the *Marishal-Colledge* be not provided with a very sufficient Principal, and Professor of Divinity, and the City with a learned and judicious Pastor, and the Kirk of Scotland has not a very consistent Member of him?

Well, said I, Your *Queries* shall be allowed a Place in this Paper, because they carry their Reasons along with them.



ANOTHER



ANOTHER LETTER

TO
MR. Thomas Blackwell, &c.

SIR,
THE Letter you lately received from Mr. William Gordon of Old Aberdeen, challenging you to make good what you had advanced from the Pulpit, against the Observation of *Christmäss*, hath since been the chief Subject of Conversation among People of all Persuasions, and the most remarkable Piece of News in the City; and as I doubt not but your Answer to it will very soon appear, so I can assure you it is much long'd for. Some People talk that you are to neglect it, disdaining to give an Answer to such a Person, yet this is what I cannot allow my self to believe; for however unworthy you may think it of you to enter the Lists with such an Antagonist, yet I, who have for a long Time been your Hearer, and who have had Occasion to hear a great many Things said on that Head, can assure you, as I do believe you are convinced your self, that your Honour is engaged, and your Silence will certainly

weaken your Character in the Place, which seems to be already on the declining Hand. I need not tell you how your Enemies, and those of the Episcopal Party will triumph in it, and improve it to your Disadvantage. That your Collegue Mr. *Maitland* never gave any Answer to the Letter that was delivered to him, was the less Surprize, because he is generally look'd upon to be a Man of small or no Learning, and very ill qualified for Debates. But from you, who possesses the Chair of the Great *Barn*, the learned Dr. *Foster*, the famous *Mennius*, and Dr. *Sibbald*, other Things are expected; and that the rather, because your Abilities are well known to the World, by your learned Works, having in your *Ratio sacra* defeated all the Rationalists, and unfolded the mysterious Decrees of Heaven, and the whole Oeconomy of Divine Providence in your *Schema sacrum*; and shown how far you are superior to the whole Kirk of Scotland, by prescribing Methods to her by which she is to preach the Gospel, in your *Methodus Evangelica*. But then, Sir, not to say more of your own Reputation, consider how unjust it would be to all the Christian World, the present Kirk of Scotland only excepted, not to edify them, and set them Right in so material a Point. What Glory will rebound to your self, and what a charitable Office will it be to them, if by your profound Learning you bring them off from the superstitious Observation of Days. Yes, should you come short of this great End, not by any Imperfection in your Reasoning, but by their Obstinacy, yet your Christian and learned Endeavours must certainly be acceptable to all good Men. Consider, Sir, It is a Duty incumbent upon you, as a Luminary of the Church, and a publick Professor of Divinity. I think I may venture to say, none of these learned Men I have before mentioned would have thought it below them to have instructed Christians, and set them right in a superstitious and unlawful Practice, tho none of them had the temporal Advantages that you enjoy. I cannot see how you can clear your self of the Charge of Sacrilege, if you shall reap Temporals so plentifully, and yet sow Spirituals so sparingly. It is no more than what your Friends of *Geneva* may justly expect from you, who however orthodox in other Things, are erroneous in this, and I think you owe them no less; remember what Obligations you ly under to their learned *Turretimes*, and other famous Authors. I might say the same of your Friends in *Holland*. Up then, Sir, Shake off all Indolence and Disdain, and even condescend to humble your self by instructing the far greater Mass of Christians; and think not that answering it from the Pulpit will be sufficient, for the Letter will be printed, and consequently spread the Contagion farther than your Sermon can reach as an Antidote. Besides, Sir, the Subject is more proper for the Desk or the Pulpit, than for the Pulpit. And so you may think it officious in me to give you Advice.

Now, Sir, tho your Humility is well known, and every Person that knows you can tell how great an Enemy you are to Vanity and Ostentation; yet something should be done for the Honour of your Society, to convince the World that it has as eminent Men, especially for a Principal and Professor of Divinity, as what the other can boast of; and if you neglect this Opportunity, it is not improbable but the other Colledge will improve it to their own Ends, and to the lessening the Reputation of yours. For tho you be all Birds of the same Nest, yet you know private Interest is a prevailing Principle and Motive in these degenerate Times: I shall at present trouble you no more, hoping that this will determine you (if you are not so already) to give a speedy and satisfactory Answer. I am,

S I R,

Your, &c.

ABERDEEN Jan. 19,
1722.

W. G.

Directed thus

To Mr. Thomas Blackwell,
Professor of Divinity in the
Marshall-Colledge in Aber-
deen.

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various offices of the County of Los Angeles, California, for the term of four years, commencing on the 1st day of January, 1901, and ending on the 31st day of December, 1904:

Office	Name
County Clerk	John W. Smith
County Treasurer	James H. Brown
County Assessor	William C. Jones
County Engineer	Robert L. Davis
County Surveyor	Charles E. Miller
County Jailor	Thomas A. Wilson
County Coroner	George F. Taylor
County Sheriff	John D. White
County Auditor	Edward G. Black
County Registrar	Frank M. Green
County Recorder	Henry J. Hall
County Controller	Samuel R. King
County Treasurer	David L. Scott
County Assessor	John P. Adams
County Engineer	Richard B. Baker
County Surveyor	William H. Clark
County Jailor	Joseph C. Evans
County Coroner	Charles D. Fisher
County Sheriff	George W. Hill
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93

THE
JANUARY